Traveling Home | Staceyann Chin

Amtrak don't have one palm tree—
the whole landscape of New England
pass invisible to the girl thinking she free
from the white flesh dancing the tanned
limbo on a seven-mile beach—
there was always something odd in the red skin
blistering with alms outreached
handing off useless American sins—
them times was real funny times—
black boys in a burlesque race for dimes
glinting in from tourists littering the sea
like they owned it more than we.

Night-travel more dread than memory
every passing light is a milestone
severing the bloodline from you own history.
every horn, the irreversible groan
of one more Pentecostal auntie fighting
not to disown me because my man
is a woman, every sound lighting
a fire for the bastard, the charlatan, the lesbian
who abandon paradise to write
poems about leaving paradise

Nobody know how I fear this slow-
moving macabre dealing out death
with a Halloween grin and glow—
in certain cars you can hear me breath
hissing like a machine shutting down
mocking me from small country to big town

The quiet confusion of the train
illustrates how far my legs stand
from the warm marble drops of rain
rolling off from my own changed hand

All this time and I still can't be sure
that leaving was the better thing
nearly ten years and still no cure
for the sad September fall of me wing

the blue sea beckoning and me calling
back, soon come! All the while knowing,
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AQLF Atlanta Queer Literary Festival

Poetry by Staceyann Chin
Photography and
Graphic Design by Martin Ledford

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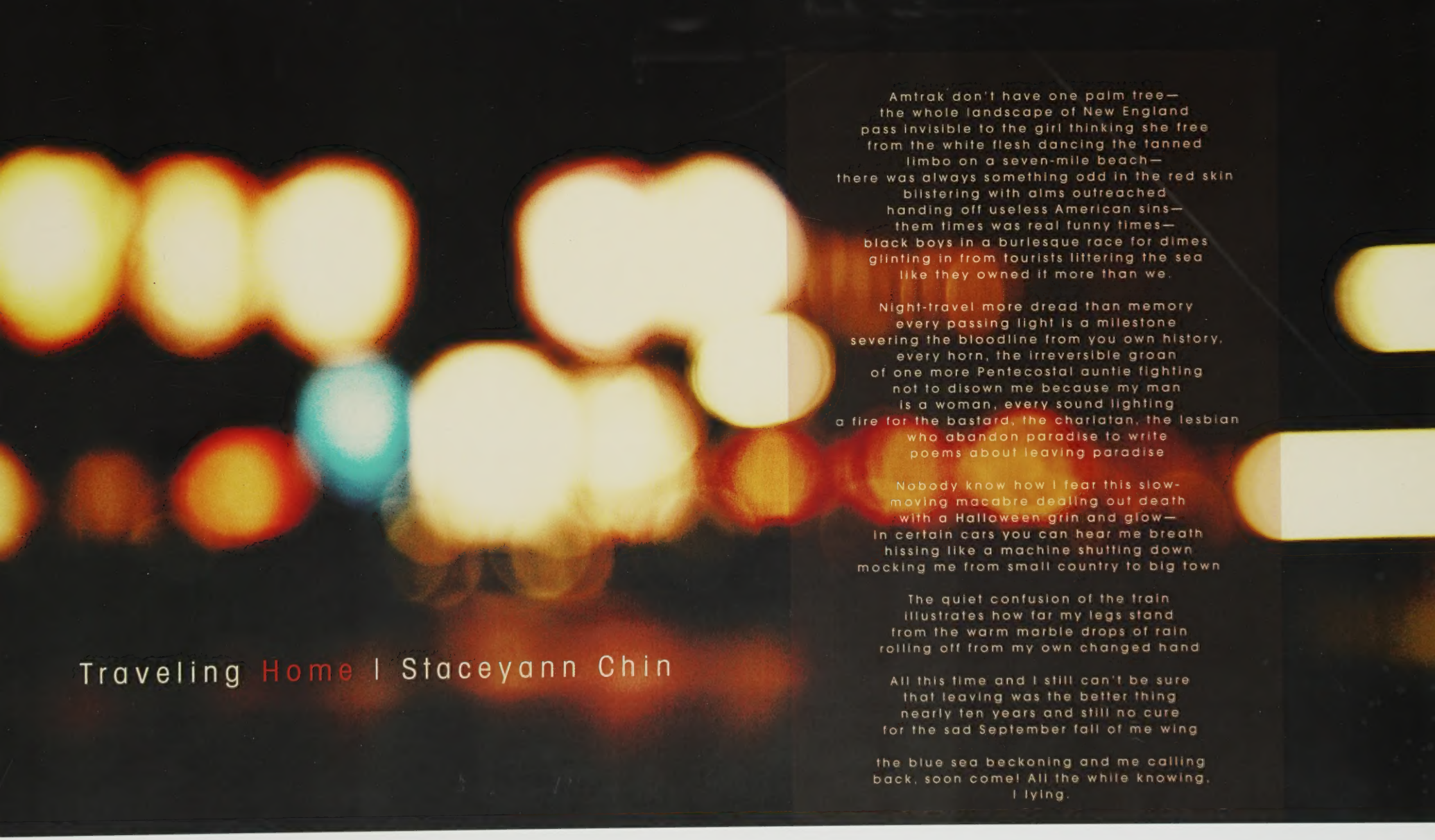

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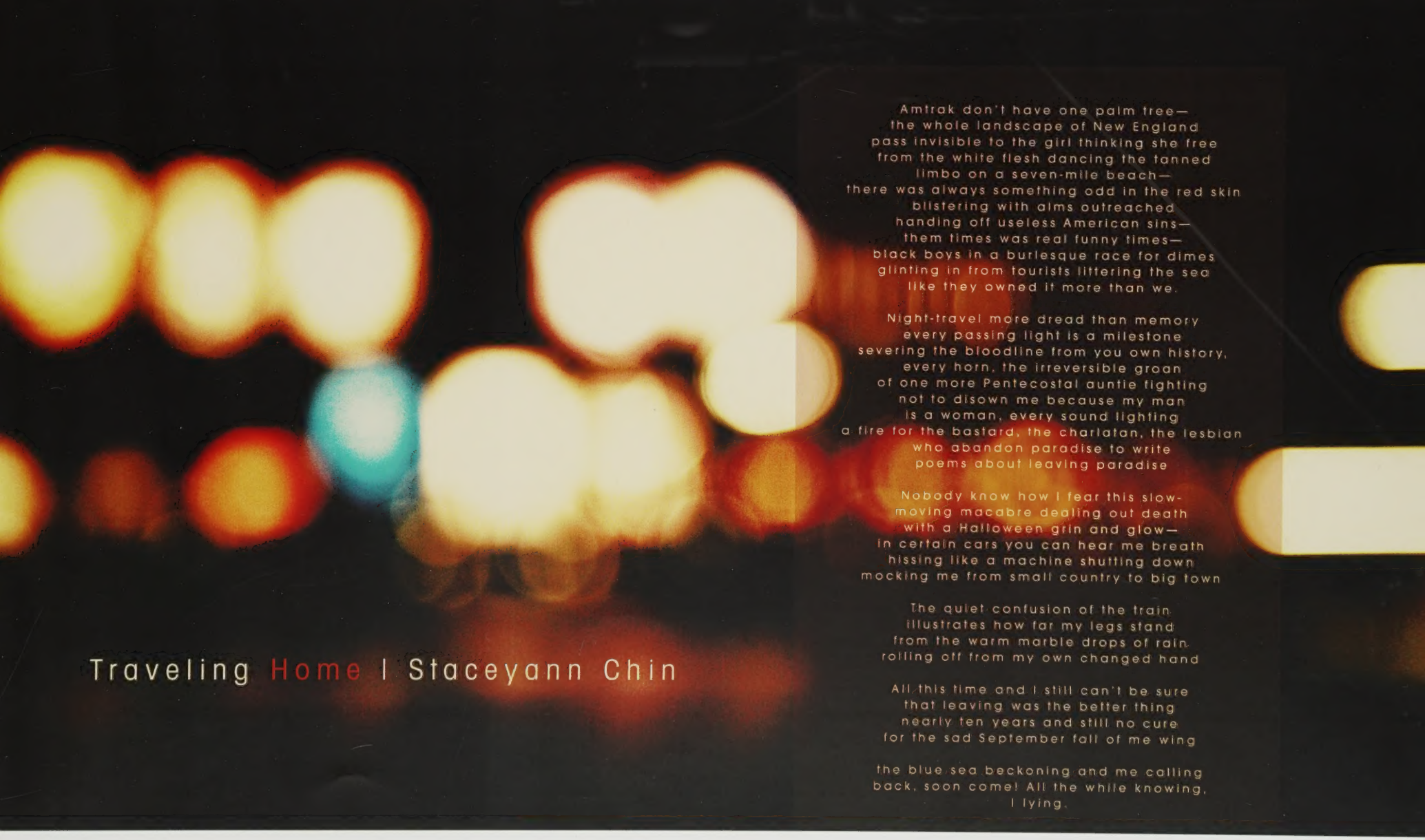

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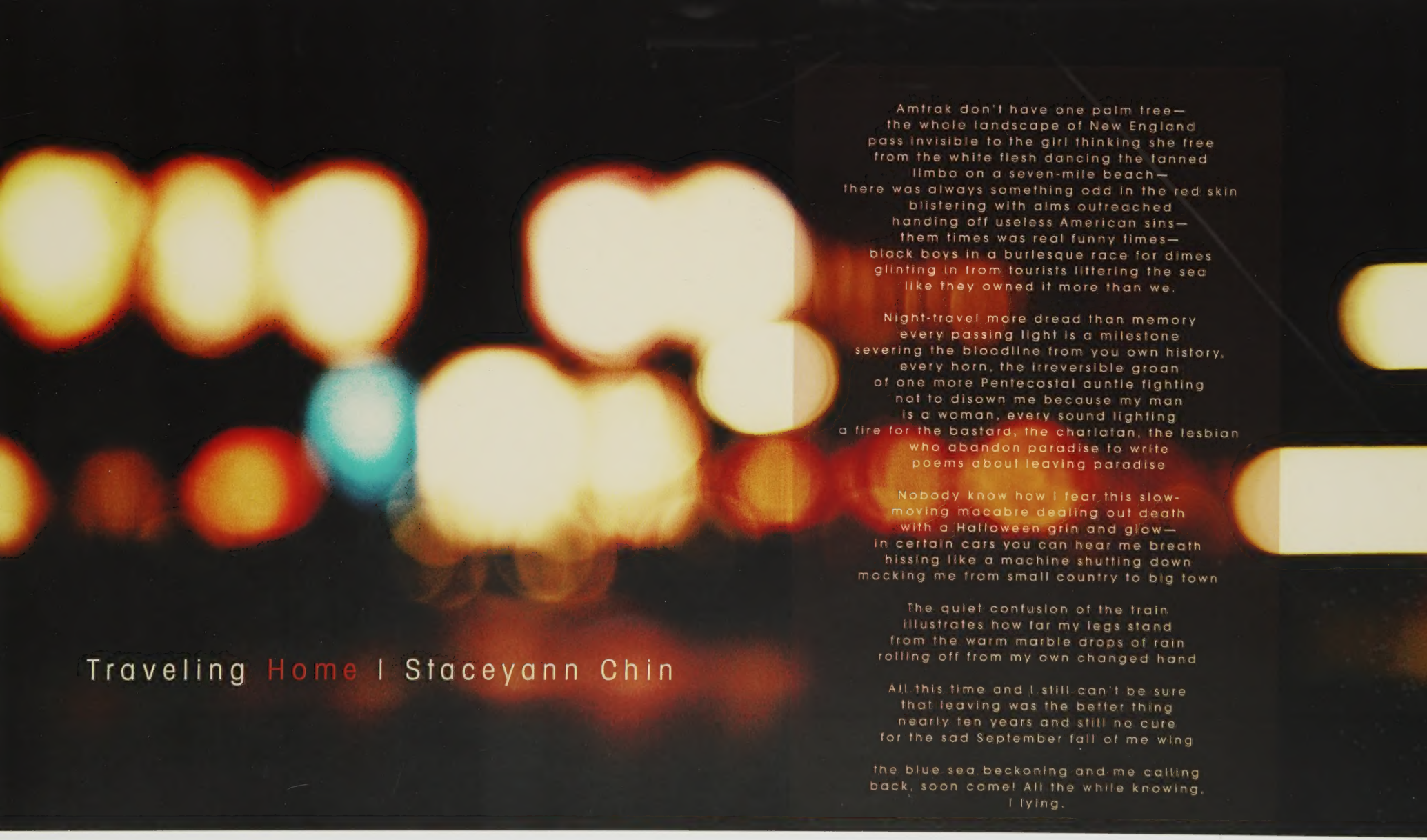

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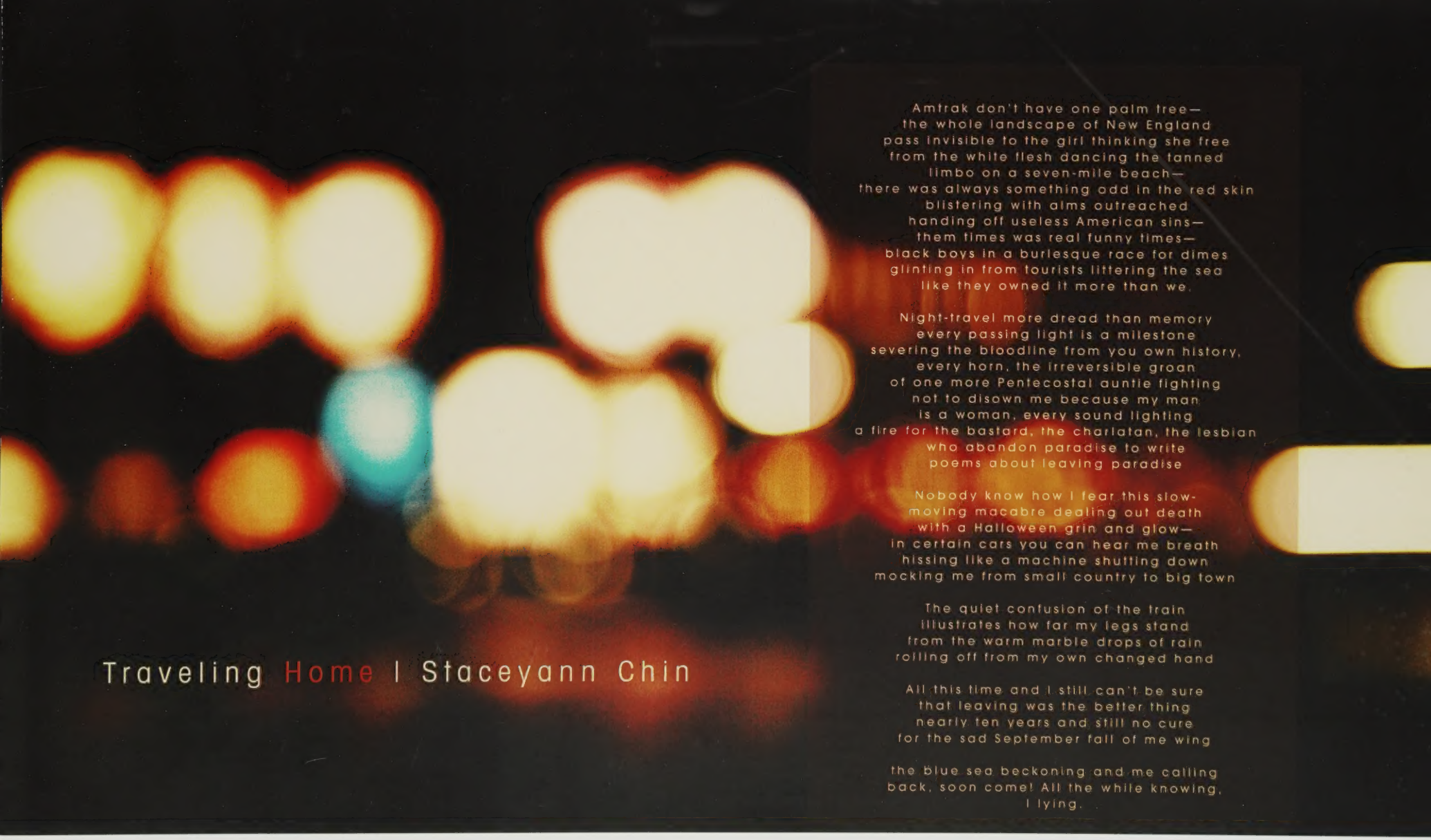

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